

NEWS RELEASE
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ISTOOK ABORTION AMENDMENT PASSES APPROPRIATIONS

Washington, D.C. - The House Appropriations Committee last night approved an amendment by Rep. Ernest Istook, (R-OK), to restore states' rights in abortion funding issues.

The amendment clarifies the law that says states may use Medicaid funding for abortions in the cases of rape and incest, but are not forced to do so.

The Clinton Administration has threatened to cut off federal funds to states which do not wish to fund such abortions. The Clinton policy has sought to override the laws and constitutions of 30 states. Several states have become embroiled in litigation against the federal government over the issue.

"Congress never intended to force states to pay for these categories of abortions," Istook said. "Congress intended for states to have the option to do so. That's what my amendment does -- it clearly says states are allowed, but not required, to pay for these abortions through Medicaid."

Istook noted the White House denunciation of his amendment directly contradicts the position of then-Governor Bill Clinton in 1986, who wrote in a letter to Arkansas Right to Life, *"I am opposed to abortion and to government funding of abortions. We should not spend state funds on abortions because so many people believe abortion is wrong."*

Istook also notes the Democrat-controlled Congress refused in 1993 to repeal the laws which limit Medicaid funding for abortions.

"The citizens of the states must be allowed to choose how their state tax dollars will be spent in funding abortions."